

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
REGARDING THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH ASIA**

May 17, 2006

Mr. Chairman:

I commend you for holding this hearing on South Asia and I welcome Assistant Secretary Boucher.

As *The Economist* recently reported, South Asia is one of the world's toughest neighborhoods and, for this and many other reasons, I believe it is important for us to strengthen our ties with India and may I suggest we begin with supporting the civil nuclear cooperation agreement.

Because this is a serious and complex matter, I wish to note a few very important facts. Unlike any other nuclear-armed nation, India has a stellar record of nonproliferation having self-imposed a 24-year moratorium on nuclear testing.

On the other hand, signatories of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) have a spotted record. France, for example, despite being a signatory of the NPT, broke a world moratorium in 1996 and conducted 6 additional tests at Moruroa Atoll in the South Pacific while the world and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) turned a blind eye.

Therefore, whatever differences we may have, whether or not India is a signatory of the NPT should not determine whether or not we support US-India civil nuclear cooperation. India has proven itself to be a strong and responsible ally and, now, as India faces growing energy demands, I am hopeful that the world's oldest democracy will stand with the world's largest democracy and support civil nuclear cooperation.

With respect to other issues confronting South Asia, I hope that we will take a hard look at promoting peace in Sri Lanka and begin to seriously address the erosion of governance in Bangladesh and Nepal. Finally, I am hopeful that we will find new ways to combat terrorism and prevent the transfer of weapons of mass destruction, including any associated technologies, to any third country or terrorist organization.

Again, I welcome our witness and look forward to his testimony.